

## **West San Carlos and South Bascom Urban Village Online Survey Summaries**

The Urban Village Team created an online survey as part of our community outreach process during the planning of the West San Carlos and South Bascom Urban Villages. This survey was available online to the public for approximately three weeks in late September and early October, 2013, with community workshops falling in between this period. Responses gathered consisted of choosing general development preferences across the two Urban Villages as well as having an opportunity to share their desires on how the specific neighborhood development should take place. These five questions related to Quality of Life, Building Typology, Street and Sidewalk Amenities, Parks/Plazas, and Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities. The first four had comment sections and also poll questions where participants were asked to choose up to four items from lists of nine to eleven elements. The final Walking/Biking Facilities section was specially designed just for comments.

### **1. Quality of Life**

In the survey of preferences for improving the quality life across the two Urban Villages, there were four choices that stood out among residents (in order of most desired): 1) Safe, inviting, and accessible parks and/or plaza spaces, 2) Safe, accessible conditions for walking and biking, 3) Places outside of work or the home to meet or interact with others, and 4) Mixture of jobs and businesses within walking distance.

Residents in the West San Carlos plan area called out the lack of food and retail options and said that poor sidewalks and landscaping make it unpleasant to get to the stores that are there. Those who responded also had issues with large amount of auto-oriented businesses, adult shops, liquor stores, and marijuana dispensaries. As turnover happens, the community called for development that is high quality, aesthetically appealing, and provides sufficient parking.

South Bascom residents believe that traffic is an issue because of speeds along South Bascom Avenue and because of cut-through traffic in surrounding neighborhoods. Community members feel that a raised median would provide traffic calming support while also limiting turns into adjacent neighborhoods. Like West San Carlos residents, people in the South Bascom area feel that there is not enough retail and walking along South Bascom was uncomfortable due to the lack of shade.

### **2. Building Typology**

For residents West San Carlos and South Bascom Urban Villages, the top four desired building typologies were: 1) Low-rise residential with ground floor retail, 2) Low-rise office with ground floor retail, 3) Low-rise retail, and 4) Mid-rise residential with ground floor retail. In this instance low-rise was considered a development that is 1 to 3 stories tall while mid-rise was 4 to 12 stories tall.

Those in the West San Carlos area had varying opinions over the intensity of development. Some of those that commented were completely opposed to any development while others pushed for a high intensity of development. In between these two sides, residents believed that West San Jose should maintain some of its low-rise character but believed that development could go much higher in some places, especially around Bus Rapid Transit stops.

Residents of the West San Carlos area were also divided in terms of types of retail needed on the corridor. Some residents believed that the street maintain its small-business character while others saw an opportunity for the plans to bring in larger format retail that could push out the less savory uses found on the strip like medical marijuana shops. All agreed though that the corridor should increase its retail options while decreasing car dealerships.

As for South Bascom residents, an important message was to preserve the business character of the neighborhood. Residents believed that there should be even more neighborhood serving commercial spaces for greater accessibility to jobs and retail. The community saw the Dick's Center site as an ideal place for high-intensity development because of nearness to the light rail stop.

### **3. Street and Sidewalk Amenities**

The top four amenities chosen from the list were: 1) Sidewalk cafes, 2) Street trees for shade, 3) Improved pedestrian lighting, and 4) Protected bike lane. The first two on this list received significantly more votes than that all of the other options.

For West San Carlos, community members consistently mentioned the need for greater attention paid to the pedestrian including sidewalk improvements, lighting, and benches. Some members also mentioned that there is poor circulation in the area for pedestrians (need for midblock crossings) and for automobiles (need for more left turns). Based on the poll numbers, residents were overwhelmingly in favor of sidewalk cafes and parklets but one resident was concerned about the amount of traffic on West San Carlos and whether that would make places such as those inhospitable.

South Bascom residents also called for mid-block to improve pedestrian circulation along the corridor. Recommended locations for these crossings were near the Santa Clara Valley Medical Center and near the Bascom Community Center. Community members again cited the need for traffic calming measures and a median to prevent drivers from cutting through residential neighborhoods. Finally, the neighborhood brought up the need to improve the Dick's Center because it was identified as blighted and not pleasant to walk past.

#### **4. Parks/Plazas**

This poll question received a wide variety of responses with no one in the community directing specific comments to one village or the other. Due to this, the analysis has to use the only the general, combined poll data. Based on that data, there was the most neighborhood support for a community garden followed by a pocket park between buildings and a pocket park on the street. Following these three, support was for a farmers' market, public art, an open plaza with seating, and plaza with trees and water feature. The final three answers (Plaza and playground, traditional playground, and large park) received a very low percentage of the votes.

Based on this polling data, it appears the community is most in support of food oriented public uses (community garden and farmers' market) as well as small-scale parks (pocket parks between buildings and on the street). Anything that was more conventional like a traditional playground area or larger park received little support compared to the other choices. It implies that smaller spaces, if thoughtful and well-designed, can successfully serve a great majority of the residents in these two urban villages.

#### **5. Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities**

Residents were asked if they encountered any problems when walking or bicycling in their neighborhood to get to and from school, work, shopping, etc. There was an outpouring of response from community members of both the West San Carlos Urban Village and South Bascom Urban Village. Over half of all survey participants took the time to share issues they have had with walking and biking along West San Carlos Street and South Bascom Avenue.

Residents of each Urban Village wished to see bike lanes along the corridor as well as significant sidewalk and crossing improvements. The roads feel unsafe to bike on because there is heavy traffic and high speeds with little bicycle protection afforded. Both areas also cited that connections to the Los Gatos Creek Trail were poor and family recreation by walking or biking was not safe. There were also not enough amenities (quality lighting, shade, landscaping, etc.) on the sidewalks to make them feel very comfortable to walk on either.

West San Carlos residents cited that the street right of way was narrow and that a bike lane was needed not just to help protect cyclists but also to act as a traffic calming device. Another issue that was mentioned in terms of biking was that the streets parallel to West San Carlos also did not serve as very good bike routes because they were poorly lit and lacked signage.

An issue for pedestrians in the West San Carlos Urban Village area that was brought up several times was lighting. Due to lack of lighting, residents felt unsafe walking along some parts of the corridor. Several community members brought up the fact that the composition of adult uses, marijuana shops, and liquor stores further exacerbates this lighting/safety problem.

South Bascom residents had many issues with the wide width of South Bascom Avenue and how fast the traffic moved along it. There are bike lanes along much of South Bascom which people mentioned that they were glad they were there but said that there are areas along the corridor where the bike lane ends and does not provide sufficient connectivity (especially around the hospital). Additionally, the traffic speeds and lack of protection led to many South Bascom community members deciding not to bike along the corridor.

In terms of walking, many South Bascom residents cited a lack of connectivity due a long, wide road with few crosswalks along it. There is a great need for mid-block crossings to break up the long stretches of no crossings. Community members also found that the speed of traffic along the corridor led to a feeling of decreased safety and comfort when walking.